

JOURNAL
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY.

*Note of Discoveries of Gems from Kandahar.—By Lieutenant
CONOLLY.*

MY DEAR SIR, *Kandahar, October 24, 1839.*

In default of something more interesting, you will perhaps not think the enclosed facsimiles of gems unworthy of place in your Journal. They are sent rather, it must be confessed, with the desire of gaining information, than a hope of being able to impart it. The number of the Journal which contains the Pehlevi Alphabet not being procurable here, we are unable to read the inscriptions. Our harvest of antiquities has as yet been most unpromising. This is partly owing to the disturbed state of the country, but also in a great measure to our researches having been confined to the southern provinces of Afghanistan, to which the Greek rule and civilization would seem only very partially to have extended. From Shikarpore to Herat or Seistan there is hardly one stone edifice, and not one of antiquity. Pure Bactrian coins are very rare, and the only description found in any quantity, are coins having some connection with the Azos series; the most common being copper coins, with a head and illegible inscription on the obverse, with the Unadpherros reverse. Seistan, which we hoped would prove an Eldorado, furnishes, or has as yet furnished, nothing but these, together with numerous Sassanian and Arsakian coins. Of the Sassanian, the most common is a species not noticed in the Journal, but probably to be recognized in some of your numismatological works. Obverse, two heads, one with the usual Sassanian high cap and long beard, the other facing it smaller.

But leaving coins to a future opportunity, I proceed to lay before you the history of the gems forwarded.

1. A Buddhist (?) monogram on an agate, found at Kandahar.

2. A female with child, and a hawk in her hand. The figures on the margin, which might be mistaken for letters, seem rather to be birds; seals with this impression seem not to be uncommon; they have been found at Herat and Kandahar. The inclosed is from an agate.

3. A Victory: agate. Kandahar.

4. A do. with fillet and palm branch, do.

5. A seated figure. Rudely executed Pehlevi character?

These are all of the collection of Colonel Stacy.

Major Leech allows me to send you the following:—

6. Similar to No. 2, Pehlevi letters distinct. Ruby.

7. Horse and rider; inscription indistinct.

8. Bacchus or Silenus?

9. A doubtful specimen, probably modern, representing a love scene from some of the innumerable tales, such as *Wamik* and *Oosra*, (a work which in spite of Van Hammer's boasted discovery, is common in Europe) *Adam and Door Khani*, &c. &c.

10. The most perfect and curious specimen of the collection was dug out of the ruins of the ancient Boonaka, upon which is now erected Nadali, the Mokum of one of the four chiefs of Seistan. This place affords innumerable relics of antiquity. Climbing up the old mound with two or three attendants, we found three copper coins in as many minutes. It is an agate seal with three faces, bored through so as to admit of its being worn round the neck. I will not venture a conjecture on the subject of the engravings. The head would seem to be Sassanian, while the peculiar position of the five fingers argue something mystical and Buddhistic.

11. Has perhaps some relation to the punja in the above; it belongs to Colonel Stacy.

The next five are also from the ruins of Boonaka, nearly the only place in Seistan which has as yet yielded antiquities. When the rain turns up the earth, the idlers hasten to the "Dujhulgurdi," as they call the rummaging of these old relics, and find large numbers of gems, small copper images of birds

and beasts, and copper, silver, and a few gold coins ; the former chiefly Caliphate and Sassanian. A potful just dug up, was brought to us from Peeshawroon, but they were every one entirely destroyed by rust ; we did not get one gold coin.

12. The Trisul, with a half-moon.

13. A very rude Buddhist sitting figure.

14. Brought on the same string with No. 10. Sculpture very rude. Obverse, apparently the Buddhist figure of the $\begin{smallmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{smallmatrix}$ series of coins ; the other face, unless it be meant for two birds, I can make nothing of. Figures of birds and beasts on agate, cut on copper seals and imaged in copper, are found in such quantities in every old town all over Afghanistan, and so exactly similar, that they alone, if no other proof were at hand, would suffice to shew the former universality of the Buddhist creed. Animals of all descriptions are found.

15 and 16. Two copper seals have, the first, a griffin ; the other a Brahmune bull.

17. Is from a copper ring, which resembles in some points the circles of animals found in Ceylon, at Behat, &c. On it may be perceived the hog, cat, two cocks, &c. &c. It was probably dug up from the Eimak hills above Herat, which besides numerous small idols of stone and metal, furnish cylinders like those of Babylon,* with arrow-headed inscriptions. I regret to have at present none to send you. The reverse of 17 seems to represent flying figures.

18. Is a seal. Are the letters Cufic ?

The next paper on the subject of the antiquities, will I hope be better worth your attention ; just now I have nothing of interest to forward, and am much pressed for time, being here a mere traveller en route to Caubul. Yours sincerely,

KHAN ALI.

* NOTE.—One of these cylinders was with the permission of the owner, Major Pottinger, laid before the Society at the last meeting with a collection of gems and coins from Herat : I trust to have it in my power to compare it with a Babylonish cylinder. Drawings of it and some of the gems are under preparation by Lieut. Kittoe, who has with his usual kindness undertaken to enable me to insert them in the Journal.